

# Garbage Gazette

Volume 19., No. 8

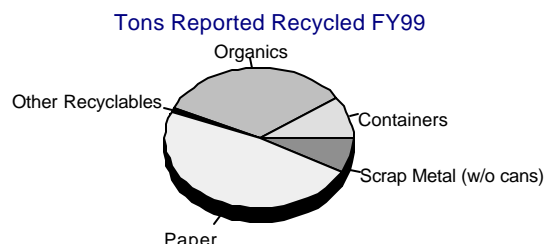
August, 2000

## State Recycling/Source Reduction Rate Remains At 25%

After a year of tumultuous trials and tribulations related to updating the DEP Solid Waste Database (from a DOS Paradox version to a Windows ACCESS version), we finally have FY99 numbers. Unfortunately, as has been the case for the last few years, the rates have not shown a significant increase. The FY99 statewide average MSW source reduction/recycling rate, **as calculated from the data submitted by Connecticut municipalities and disposal facilities**, was once again **25%**.

Recycled	749,780 tons (0.2290 TPY**)
Disposed	2,417,864 tons (0.7385 TPY)
Generated	3,167,680 tons (0.9675 TPY)
Source Reduced*	43,917 tons ((0.0134 TPY)

\*BY Composted+Grasscycled    \*\*TPY=tons/person/year



However, that “stagnant” 25% rate belies actual trends. The rates at which various major material types were reported recycled did not remain “stagnant” over the past several years (FY97 –FY99) although the overall reported MSW recycling rate did:

**The FY99 reported amounts of organics recycled/composted and paper recycled were higher than those reported for FY97** (inspite of a very slight decrease in FY99 as compared to FY98). However, those increases were in part offset by decreases in the weight of containers (bottles and cans) recycled. This is probably a reflection of changes in the material composition in the container stream rather than an indication of decreased recycling efforts i.e. glass is being replaced at an increasing rate by lighter weight materials such as plastic.

And, as has been the case for years, the 25% ~~Areported@~~ recycling/source reduction rate, which is based on recycling information provided to DEP by the municipalities in their annual recycling reports, belies or underestimates the actual recycling rate. There is actually more recycling going on than is evidenced by the reported numbers - i.e. we are not getting numbers on material recycled through the bottle bill infrastructure, commercially recycled scrap metal, commercially recycled waste oil, storage batteries returned and recycled through the CT battery deposit system, material recycled directly to mills or through central warehouses and distribution centers, etc. So our actual recycling/source reduction rate is probably closer to 30% than 25%.

However, even accepting the limitations of our reporting system, the unchanging recycling rate over the past several years is worrisome. Although we have made great recycling progress since mandatory recycling began in 1991, going from a recycling rate of probably less than 10% (unreported and not tracked) to our rate today which is probably close to 29%-30% (reported 24% + 1.4% source reduction due to home composting and grasscycling + ≈5% unreported and untracked), it is time for us to launch ourselves off the 24/25% plateau. There are there are still sectors in our state that are not recycling up to their potential. How do we get Connecticut’s small businesses to recycle? How do we get those residents, who just seem ~~Ato~~ too busy@ to care about their potential to help conserve natural resources, to recycle? What other items can we recycle?

Promising strategies for boosting Connecticut’s recycling rate include:

- Increasing available options for yard trimmings and food scrap composting (commercial, institutional, residential backyard) – See the following article for more information on DEP efforts to make commercial composting more viable in our state;
- Recycling additional marketable materials such as textiles and additional paper grades;
- Promoting greater reuse, reconditioning, repair, and recycling of discarded electronics;
- Implementing municipal PAYT (pay-as-you-throw) programs;  
 PAYT is an approach to integrated solid waste management in which households are charged for waste collection and disposal services based on the amount of waste they throw away, much the same way as they pay for other utilities. If they throw away more, they pay more, which is a fairer, more equitable approach giving residents greater control over costs. PAYT can raise revenue, sustain solid waste management costs, **and reduce waste disposal and increase recycling rates.**
- Increasing recycling participation among Connecticut's small businesses.  
 Anecdotal it has become apparent that many small businesses are not recycling, even though they, in aggregate, generate significant amounts of paper and other recyclables. Municipalities, local chambers and other businesses associations need to work together to establish convenient, low cost, small business recycling options that will allow small businesses to recycle cooperatively, in a sustainable, convenient, and cost effective manner. *Remember*, small businesses are not exempt from complying with state recycling requirements. If they are not recycling they are in violation of state and local law.
- Increasing recycling enforcement efforts by the DEP Recycling Office

Municipalities which seek assistance with any of these strategies should call the DEP Recycling Office at (860) 424-3365.

### Consultant Selected for Organics Identification and Mapping Project.



Through an RFP process, CT DEP has selected Draper/Lennon, Inc. to identify, quantify and map the density of source separated organic materials (SSOM) from commercial and institutional generators throughout Connecticut. The primary goal is to use the information for multiple purposes in planning future recycling and reuse of these materials and it is DEP's hope that the availability of this information will encourage the development and implementation of innovative SSOM recycling facilities. The scope of the project includes: (1) developing an Access database of large quantity SSOM generators which will be linked to the DEP's GIS database; (2) producing a series of GIS maps depicting different scenarios by generator types; (3) creating formulas for quantifying organics from generator types; (5) describing potential barriers to sourcing and processing SSOM; and (6) identification of solutions to overcome those barriers. The final report will detail the findings of the project and is slated to be completed by February, 2001. A copy of the RFP can be found on the CT DEP website at <http://dep.state.ct.us/wst/recycle/rfpmap.htm>. For more information, contact K.C. Alexander at 860-424-3365 or [kathy.alexander@po.state.ct.us](mailto:kathy.alexander@po.state.ct.us)

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